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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 RABAT 002192

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/01/2009

TAGS: [LY](#) [MO](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)

SUBJECT: QADHAFI WOOS THE LIBYAN EX-PM

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Classified By: POL/C Timothy Lenderking for Reasons 1.4. (b) and (d)

11. (C) Former Libyan PM Mohammed Otman Assed, in exile in Rabat since 1969, told Polcouns on October 7 that he continued to receive visits and phone calls from Libyan regime insiders encouraging him to drop his opposition to Qadhafi and move back to Libya. Assed said that in July he received a visit from Dr. Abdullah Otman, whom Assed described as a "reform-minded advisor" to Qadhafi. Assed believed Otman had been instructed by Qadhafi to treat Assed "with respect." Otman brought with him a suitcase with USD 250,000 in cash as an incentive to Assed to abandon exile and return to Libya.

12. (C) While not revealing whether he had accepted the cash or not, Assed said he could not be bought by the Libyan regime. He told Polcouns that he had made clear to Dr. Otman that he had no intention of returning to Libya given his advanced age and failing health, and certainly not for any political position, but in any case he would need to see a serious reform process started promoting internal democracy, as well as receive compensation for the land and property the Qadhafi regime had seized upon coming to power. Assed said those assets were "worth millions" now, far more than the amount Dr. Otman brought with him.

13. (C) Assed continued that despite American and international pressure, from what he could see the internal situation in Libya was really not improving. There were still widespread human rights abuses, and there was no real effort to devolve power to elected bodies or the people, which Assed advocated. There were still political prisoners, the population was suppressed, there was no opposition, and outspoken journalists had disappeared.

14. (C) Assed nevertheless insisted he was not calling for the overthrow of Qadhafi. He thought Libya could live with Qadhafi provided there was a credible attempt at promoting reform. In this light, Assed, offered, it would be unwise for the US to remove Libya from the terrorism list; that step should only come with an improved internal climate and more freedom in Libya.

15. (C) Assed then gave to Polcouns the following letter (para 7), which he claimed he had sent recently to Qadhafi. He hoped Polcouns would share the letter with the Department.

16. (SBU) Assed's son Osama, a construction engineer in

Morocco, called Polcouns several days later to draw attention to a small article in the French-language weekly Tel Quel which claimed that the GOM, and FM Benaissa in particular, was promoting rapprochement between ex-PM Assed and Qadhafi. Osama Assed said the article was false, that neither he nor his family had been approached by FM Benaissa or other Moroccan government officials.

17. (SBU) Begin text of letter:

In the Name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful

His Excellency,
Colonel Muammar Qadhafi

I cannot but begin my letter by expressing to Your Excellency my deepest gratitude for the good feelings you have shown towards me, as I also wish to express my sincere appreciation of your stated desire that I be treated with due respect and regard. This, as well as Your Excellency's consideration, your sound appraisal, your equanimity, your far-sightedness and your patience have all been more than amply brought forth by the meeting held lately with Dr. Abdullah Otman.

Excellency, all that has occurred recently has greatly motivated me to maintain my friendship towards you as it has encouraged me, despite my failing health, to present my thoughts concerning Libya especially now that it has entered upon very difficult negotiations with the Western States.

Excellency, you are no doubt aware of the relations that bind me to various international parties, and it is this state of affairs which has enabled me to form a certain assessment of what developments the world greatly expects of Libya. The acceptance of Libya into the political and economic fold is not a matter easily or quickly attained unless Libya is to embark in some way on political, economical and social reforms.

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Excellency, because of your sound judgment, your experience and your political acumen you are no doubt alive to the fact that we must face this political flood as Noah faced the Flood by building the Ark to weather the storm and gain safe refuge. As the Flood radically altered the habitat and the inhabitants of the Earth, so too will this political flood impose wide changes on the world, not least of which will be new political concepts and practices as well as new regional powers and new roles for many states.

Excellency, your philosophical analysis of the historical process and of current affairs have been incentive enough for me to present to your attention an idea which I hope you may be able to spare time to personally consider.

Today, a liberal, democratic and multi-party political system based on human rights, on freedom of expression and of the press, on the separation of powers, and on free enterprise is the most plausible political system. No country which chooses to adopt a different system can hope to gain full acceptance among nations. On the contrary, it will be met with nothing less than punitive measures and sanctions. In this context, China has been the only nation able to impose itself internationally; but only by accepting free enterprise and so sharing a common factor with the United States. In addition, China has to a certain extent modified its political system by allowing for a rotation of power among individuals and by bequeathing prerogatives to the legislature and to Party committees. No doubt, China's huge population as well as greatly aiding it in imposing itself, has also brought home to the world the extreme necessity of internal stability in the country.

Excellency, Libya, a sparsely populated state within short distance of Europe, can hardly compare in resources to Europe

and America no matter what level petroleum prices may reach. Furthermore, Libya's development is linked to the extent of the West's social and economic dealings with her.

In the past, Your Excellency, not only have you striven to give Libya a distinctive individuality, but have gone even further by creating a system of rule that has aroused national pride among Libyans who, by participating in popular congresses, have gained in political awareness and responsibility and have come to feel that their voice can be heard. Undoubtedly, during the Cold War, such an order was able to prevent Libya from falling under the direct influence of either of the two World Powers and you have, Your Excellency, adroitly preserved Libya's political independence in spite of what that entailed in social and economical difficulties.

Regardless of the wrongs and injustice I have personally been subjected to in those years, I fully appreciate that the Revolutionary Committees are the arm Your Excellency chose to safeguard the political order that preserved Libya's independence. Unfortunately, the revolutionary Committees, not grasping the depth of your thinking, resorted to the use of repressive measures which have caused much affliction among the Libyan people.

Excellency, the one remaining superpower, by virtue of its economic power, its military and scientific progress and the freedom it guarantees its people, has forced the world to adopt its ways. As for China, it has long elected to refrain from entering into international disputes in order to be able to vie with the United States technologically and scientifically. In like manner should Libya comply with what the world expects by embarking on a new political experience, yet preserving its integrity and its revolutionary principles.

It is the preservation of the country's integrity and the upholding of its revolutionary principles that calls for Your Excellency's continued presence as Head of Libya able to advance social justice and to ensure Libya's freedom of all political and economic dependency. Moreover, the aforementioned points should be stipulated in a constitution qualifying the continuity of the revolution in a leader from your offspring.

The participation of the country in international politics can only take place after the setting up of organs of state according to a written constitution and the appointment of a cabinet of ministers bestowed with powers and responsible to the head of state and to a bicameral legislature. In turn, the bicameral legislature should be composed of a lower house with legislative powers enabling it to hold the government to

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account, and an upper house whose main role is to ensure that all institutions comply with the principles of the revolution and adhere to the concept of human rights. Among the other priorities should also be a creation of a higher council for justice and a council for information and media.

Excellency, what thoughts I have expressed above for your consideration are but a sincere expression of my willingness and that of my sons to put ourselves at the service of Libya, leadership and people, refusing as we do to compromise Libya's unity, her sovereignty and her dignity. And you shall find us always, Excellency, as soldiers mobilized in the service of the country.

Yours faithfully, Mohammed Otman Assed

End Letter.

Comment

18. (C) We leave it to our Libya experts to advise on the

utility of further contact with Assed on the issues raised in his letter. He remains available to us if we desire any follow-up.

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